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For Immediate Release

State Judicial Ethics Committee elects new chair, fills 2 vacancies on committee

FRANKFORT, Ky., Feb. 7, 2006 — Attorney Arnold Taylor of Covington has been elected chair of the Judicial Ethics Committee, Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert announced today. The committee chose Mr. Taylor to fill the vacancy created when former chair, Circuit Judge James L. Bowling Jr. of Pineville, resigned to accept a position with the Judicial Conduct Commission.

"I am honored that my colleagues have elected me to lead this important committee," said Mr. Taylor. "It is a pleasure to serve the Commonwealth in this way." He holds a juris doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law and has practiced law with O'Hara, Ruberg, Taylor, Sloan & Sergent since 1965.

Chief Justice Lambert also announced that two new members have been selected to fill vacancies on the committee. Jefferson County Circuit Judge Ann O'Malley Shake replaces Judge Bowling, the committee's former representative from Circuit Court. Judge Shake earned her law degree from the University of Louisville School of Law. She was elected to Jefferson County District Court in 1989 where she served until being appointed circuit judge in 1998. Judge Shake was subsequently elected to Jefferson County Circuit Court in 1999.

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Donald H. Combs of Pikeville will fill the remaining attorney position. He replaces Uhel O. Barrickman, who passed away in September 2005. Mr. Barrickman, a former Glasgow attorney, had served on the Judicial Ethics Committee since its formation in 1978. Mr. Combs holds a law degree from the University of Kentucky College of Law and is the senior partner with Combs & Combs, PSC in Pikeville.

"This committee has a reputation for the strength of its members and Judge Bowling is to be commended for his leadership as chair," said Chief Justice Lambert. "I personally welcome Mr. Taylor, Judge Shake and Mr. Combs and believe the work of the Judicial Ethics Committee will only be enhanced by their commitment and expertise."

The Judicial Ethics Committee is composed of three judges and two attorneys. Those serving in addition to the three new members are Judge Laurance B. VanMeter of the Kentucky Court of Appeals and Judge Michael W. Harrod, vice chief regional district judge for Anderson, Shelby and Spencer counties. Jean Collier, senior staff attorney with the State Law Library, serves as executive secretary for the committee.

The committee serves in an advisory capacity by giving judges and judicial candidates guidance on prospective conduct. The committee responds to inquiries regarding a variety of matters, including permissible campaign conduct, when disqualification from a case is necessary, and other possible conflicts of interest in financial and personal matters. The judges are elected by their peers from the Court of Appeals, Circuit Court and District Court, and the attorney members are appointed by the Kentucky Bar Association's Board of Governors. The committee issues formal opinions only for matters of statewide importance. All published opinions can be found online at www.kycourts.net (click on Administrative Office of the Courts, State Law Library and Judicial Ethics Opinions), while both formal and informal opinions going back to 1978 are housed at the Capitol in Frankfort.

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